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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2457

April 20, 1990

GENETICALLY ALTERED POTATOES -- USDA will begin testing a genetically altered potato in Idaho in May to make sure inserting genes into a potato will not interfere with the plant's quality. The experimental potatoes will carry two additional marker genes for research purposes, says James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. "The genes being transferred have proved innocuous in many previous experiments," he said. The research is designed to contain the plants & their pollen during the experiment and to destroy them afterwards. Contact: Anita Brown (301) 436-5931.

GLOWING TRANSGENIC MICROORGANISM -- USDA has issued a permit to an Auburn Univ. scientist to study the movement of a microbe genetically engineered to glow. The tests will take place in Macon Co., Ala., beginning in April. One of the benefits of this research, says Joseph Shaw, assistant professor of botany & microbiology at Auburn, is observing the progress of the disease without destroying the plants, as traditional laboratory methods require. Contact: Anita Brown (301) 436-5931.

CHEMICAL-RESISTANT CATTLE PEST -- A panel of federal, state & industry experts have come up with new strategies for livestock producers in their war with the horn fly. The fly's growing resistance to pyrethroid insecticides, says USDA Entomologist Sidney Kunz, is a problem in all major cattle producing areas of the U.S.-- including Hawaii -- and in parts of Canada. The strategies include not applying any horn-fly insecticide until flies become a serious problem, using compounds other than pyrethroids & timing chemical controls for maximum results. Kunz also has a fact sheet describing the strategies. Contact: Sidney Kunz (512) 257-3566.

RURAL HEALTH INFO CLEARINGHOUSE -- USDA & HHS are establishing a new health service to provide info to help small communities deal with health care problems. The service will be known as the Rural Information Center Health Service. Health information will be available toll-free through an 800 telephone number, says Joseph Howard, director of USDA's National Agricultural Library. Contact: Brian Norris (301) 344-3778.

NEW WEAPON AGAINST AFLATOXIN -- A compound used to prevent caking in animal feed may reduce levels of aflatoxin in the milk of animals eating contaminated grain. "Very high levels of aflatoxin can cause acute poisoning and may cause liver cancer in humans," says USDA Veterinary Toxicologist Roger B. Harvey. In one test, the level of aflatoxin in the cows' milk dropped 20 to 47 percent after eating a diet including the anti-caking compound. Contact: Roger B. Harvey (409) 260-9259.

FOLTZ SWORN IN -- Sec. Clayton Yeutter has sworn in John C. Foltz as administrator of USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service. Foltz oversees all FGIS operations, including management of the national grain inspection & weighing system. Foltz served as executive director of the Ohio Grain & Feed Assoc; chief of markets with the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture and an assistant administrator for USDA's Foreign Ag Service. Foltz received B.S. & M.S. degrees in agriculture from Ohio State. Contact: Allen Atwood (202) 475-3367.

AGING SYMPTOMS & DRUG ABUSE -- Every year, about a fourth of people over age 70 take a fall. Although falls in older adults can be attributed to illness or other physical impairments, substance abuse & alcoholism can sometimes be the catalyst, says Judith Warren, a gerontologist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Warren says researchers are just beginning to discover the prevalence of substance abuse among the elderly. Contact: Judith Warren (409) 845-1146.

SOY INKS -- Soy inks are one of an expanding series of soy-based products which make it possible to print today's publications with tomorrow's technology, says Agronomist Lowell McCormick, a field representative of the American Soybean Association. McCormick says the soy news inks have about 70 percent soybean oil. Among U.S. newspapers using soy inks are: Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, St. Petersburg Times and the Cedar Rapids Gazette. Contact: Phil Massey (504) 388-4141.

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CORN -- Corn cells, with new genes added, have produced fertile plants that pass new genetic traits to their offspring. USDA Molecular Biologist Michael E. Fromm & Charles L. Armstrong with Monsanto Co. are working together on the project. The techniques, says Fromm, should help pave the way for introducing valuable new traits, such as insect or disease resistance, into corn, wheat, oats, barley & rice. Contact: Michael E. Fromm (415) 559-5908.

50 YEARS OF RESEARCH -- USDA is celebrating the 50th anniversary of four of USDA's largest research centers. The centers are in New Orleans, La.; Peoria, Ill.; Albany, Calif.; and Philadelphia, Pa. Consumers will recognize a number of products & end results that came from these centers -- mass produced penicillin, frozen concentrated orange juice, permanent press cotton fabrics & instant potato flakes. Contact: Matt Bosisio (309) 685-4011.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1715 -- In the last few weeks, the U.S. has been engaged in important trade discussions all over the world. Brenda Curtis talks with the U.S. deputy trade representative about recent negotiations with Japan, the Soviet Union & the European Community. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1197 -- Alternatives to toxic products; recycling gains momentum; a new diet ingredient; saving bodies of water; fighting global climate change at home. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1704 -- USDA News Highlights; new crop price predictions; U.S./Japanese trade update; farm bill keyword -- flexibility; FDA releases new info on sulfamethazine in milk. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1316 -- A new dietary breakthrough; a cholesterol reducer; a fat substitute; new diet products; attracting "good" bugs. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., April 25, poultry production; Thurs., April 26, oil crops outlook, world tobacco situation; Mon., April 30, ag price update; Tues., May 1, crop/weather update.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.  
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

(Week of April 16)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's "LISA" program; Lynn Wyvill has tips on preventing foodborne illness; Will Pemble reports on a new USDA melon meter to measure sweetness.

ACTUALITIES -- Sec. Clayton Yeutter leads an Earth Day tree planting ceremony; USDA Asst. Sec. Charles Hess on agriculture & the environment; Ann Chadwick, USDA consumer advisor, on Consumers Week; Greg Gajewski, USDA economist, with the latest U.S. ag outlook; Al West, with USDA's Forest Service, on the forest fire season (with B-roll).

NEXT WEEK -- DeBoria Janifer reports on cutting fat from your diet; Pat O'Leary profiles USDA's library for "LISA."

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY . . . . . 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
SATURDAY . . . . . 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D  
MONDAY . . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFFMIKE

1990...looks as if it will be a year with a spring, says Rich Hawkins (KRVN, Lexington, Neb.), unlike previous years when growing conditions changed quickly from cold winter to hot summer. Rich is working with the Foodwatch Committee of the Nebraska Council for Public Relations and Agriculture. The committee is producing a state plan of action for the Foodwatch program of the Agriculture Council of America. ACA says Foodwatch is designed to build public confidence in the quality of the nation's food supply.

NEW...farm director at KMMJ Grand Island, Neb., is Dennis Morrice. Our thanks to Rich Hawkins for the information.

SPRING...storms are certainly welcome in Iowa, says Mike Buchanan (KBIZ, Ottumwa). Recent series have wet the topsoil creating improved planting conditions. Mike says the situation is much better than during the last two years, but subsoil remains dry.

***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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TOPIC...of primary concern in Florida is water, says Catherine Lister (Florida's Radio Network, Orlando). Almost the entire state is under water use restrictions due to drought. She says the water issue is becoming an important item in their coverage of the race for Florida commissioner of agriculture.

REDUCED...water supply is also an important matter in southern California. Santa Barbara has banned watering gardens except from hand-held buckets, \$500 fines are proposed in Los Angeles for hosing sidewalks, San Francisco hopes its new pipeline will compensate for a 50 percent decline in spring runoff, and there is a 50 percent reduction in water delivered to farmers in the central valley. George Gatley (Western Agri-Radio Networks, Yuma, Ariz.) notes officials say the drought could last for years.

  
VIC POWELL  
Chief, Radio & TV Division